campaign. Had we been defeated, this fault would have been no reproach, though properly enough the loss of the battle would have been attributed to it; in that case the strength of the positions held by the troops would have been manifest, since to it the army would have owed its safety, together with the chance to await reinforcements from Switzerland and France, and to reassemble at Mentz, for thus we could have maintained ourselves on the left bank of the Po, while Melas could hope only to withdraw to Mantua and take his normal position. This was Napoleon's commentary at the close of his life: likewise he had declared, as Antom-marchi asserts, that he would have crossed the Po on one of his five bridges covered by his batteries, would have combined his first division with those he had left behind, and then would have attacked and destroyed each successive Austrian corps as it crossed the stream in pursuit. In any case Marengo was the pattern of an offensive campaign organized, not to win battles and spare the lives of soldiers, but to destroy an enemy. In a just cause this policy is great and humane; in an unjust cause any warfare is butchery. To assert, as many do, that Marengo was superb, but unpatriotic, is simply to renounce the cause in which it was fought. As to the strategy of the campaign, the final judgment must be that of Napoleon himself: To be a good general you must know mathematics; that serves in a thousand circumstances to clarify your ideas. Perhaps I owe my success to my mathematical ideas: a general should never make pictures, this is the worst of all. Because a partizan has captured a position, you need not think the whole army was there; my great talent, my chief distinction, is to see clear in everything, it is even the style of my eloquence to see beneath all its appearances the root of the question. It is the perpendicular.